

conclusion, in spite of the many difficulties which his residence in New York and the critical circumstances of the times have raised against him. It would be untrue to say it is not open to criticism upon some points; but how few undertakings of the sort rise above the standard of mediocrity!

We cannot but conscientiously commend Mr. Elliot's work to our brother-ornithologists, and advise them to make an early application for copies of it, as the drawings are now erased from the stones, and the number left for sale is very limited.

We have several other American publications in hand, a notice of which we are compelled, by want of space, to defer until our next issue.

XXXI.—*Letters, Extracts from Correspondence, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "To the Editor:"—

To the Editor of 'The Ibis.'

SIR,—Having been enabled, by another winter in Egypt, to continue the observations on the habits and nidification of the Spotted Cuckoo (*Cuculus glandarius*), made last year in company with my friend Mr. Allen, and communicated by him in the September Number of 'The Ibis'*, I venture to send you the following extracts from my note-book, trusting that the interest of the subject will prove sufficient excuse for the rough form in which they are presented, especially as I consider that they clearly establish the fact of the parasitic habits of this bird, at least as far as Egypt is concerned. Last year I had the pleasure of presenting to the Zoological Society a young *C. glandarius*, taken by me from a nest of *Corvus cornix*; and this year, as will be seen from the subjoined notes, I have obtained, in repeated instances, both eggs and young birds from similar situations.

Jan. 20th. Near Thebes, shot two *C. glandarius* in a "sont"-grove, the female with ovaries very much developed. Seeing a nest of *Corvus cornix* in one of the trees of the same grove, I

* See Ibis, 1862, p. 357.

sent an Arab up, and obtained three eggs, two of *C. cornix*, and one much smaller and altogether different in size, shape, and colour, which he called that of the "Abou ghrāb" ("Father of the Crow").

Jan. 27th. Three eggs of *C. cornix* and one of *C. glandarius* in the same nest, the young birds alive in the eggs. The difference in the position of the toes was distinctly visible in them. A female *C. glandarius* shot in the same grove. Another nest was brought to me, containing three young *C. cornix* and one *C. glandarius*.

Feb. 24th. Near Assouan (first capture), found three eggs of *C. cornix* and one of *C. glandarius*; and in the same grove obtained four young *C. glandarius*, all of different ages, from as many nests of *C. cornix*.

The same day, found two eggs of *C. cornix* and one of *C. glandarius*.

Feb. 25th. Near Kom Ombos, found two eggs of *C. glandarius* and one of *C. cornix*, in the same nest; and in another, three of *C. cornix* and one of *C. glandarius*.

March 2nd. Esnek. Two eggs of *C. cornix* and two of *C. glandarius* (from the same nest) were brought to me to the boat; and the same day I found two young *C. glandarius* in one nest, and two others in two other nests of *C. cornix*.

March 5th. Luxor. Found two eggs of *C. glandarius* and two of *C. cornix* in the same nest.

March 5th. Karnak. Two eggs of *C. glandarius* in two nests of *C. cornix*.

March 11th. Near Siout. Two young *C. glandarius* in nests of *C. cornix* (one of these is still alive, in my possession).

March 16th. Three of *C. cornix* and one of *C. glandarius* brought to the boat.

March 10th. Found an egg in a *C. glandarius* on dissection, nearly ready for exclusion, the measurements of which coincided with several of the above-mentioned eggs.

In colouring and markings these eggs present the same varieties as those described by the Rev. H. B. Tristram as found by him in Algeria.

I have not thought it necessary to particularize the instances

where birds were shot, having met with them throughout the whole of Egypt, from Damietta to Assouan, and in one instance in Nubia, where, by-the-by, I have never met with *C. cornix*. I may further add, that this year the *C. glandarius* was more plentiful than last, and appeared to be a remarkably early breeder, as may be seen by reference to the dates.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,
J. H. COCHRANE.

To the Editor of 'The Ibis.'

Genoa, June 5, 1863.

SIR,—My friend Mr. J. H. Cochrane having informed me of his intention of communicating to 'The Ibis' the results of his observations on the parasitic habits of *Cuculus glandarius*, I venture to trouble you, by way of supplement, with a few notes of my own on the same subject which I have been able to make since his return to Europe, and which, though they contain nothing fresh, are so entirely corroborative of his remarks, that I think we may consider the question fairly set at rest.

Being encamped for a few days near Dashoor (a village some 20 miles S.S.W. of Cairo), for collecting-purposes, about the middle of April of the present year, my attention was called to the presence of several spotted Cuckoos in a long line of "sont"-groves which extends along the edge of the desert, with slight interruptions, from beyond Dashoor to Abousir, a distance of some eight miles.

A close search after the nests of *Corvus cornix* was at once instituted, which was not altogether without success; for, out of fifteen or sixteen nests examined, four contained either eggs or young of *C. glandarius*.

I give the instances below in the order in which they were discovered; and may remark, that not only did I find all the nests myself, but divided with my Arab attendant the unpleasant task of ascending to them through a perfect *chevaux de frise* of long thorns, extremely painful to one's feelings.

April 16, 1863. Dashoor.

No. 1. Eggs:—1 *C. glandarius*; 5 *C. cornix*. No. 2. Young:—

1. *C. glandarius*; 3 *C. cornix*. No. 3. Young:—2 *C. glandarius*; 3 *C. cornix*.

April 20, 1863. Abousir.

No. 4. Eggs:—1 *C. glandarius*; 3 *C. cornix*.

In both instances where the eggs were hatched the young Cuckoos were much more forward than the Crows, being comfortably feathered, whilst the latter were still naked. Whether this proceeds from the egg of *C. glandarius* requiring less incubation than those of *C. cornix*, or whether the female Cuckoo lays in new, empty nests, has yet to be ascertained, though the fact that one Cuckoo's egg had the transparent appearance peculiar to freshly-laid eggs, whilst those of the Crow in the same nest had been laid some time, would seem to favour the former supposition. From the very first there is no possibility of mistaking the identity of the two birds, even without reference to the zygodactylic structure of the foot.

Only such nests appear to be chosen by the female Cuckoo as are built in the "sont"-groves; for we never found any in those built in isolated trees—rather a favourite position with *C. cornix*.

The *C. glandarius* has three distinct notes—the ordinary cry of the ♂, "Kee ou! kee ou!", a short, grating note of warning or alarm, uttered by the ♂ when disturbed, "Cark! cark!", and a kind of angry chattering, that of the ♀ which I have heard answering the first-mentioned.

During the same excursion, amongst other less important acquisitions, I obtained several eggs of *Bubo ascalaphus*, and a live ♀ bird caught on the nest, and two of *Pterocles exustus*, also with the ♀ bird.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

S. STAFFORD ALLEN.

To the Editor of 'The Ibis.'

SIR,—It is pleasant to notice the flight of 'The Ibis' into the valleys of the Apennines and among the peaks of the Pennine Alps; and we welcome the notes of our first Italian contributor, Dr. Salvadori. May I hazard a conjecture on the Doctor's inference as to the existence of the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophanes nivalis*) as a permanent resident on the Apennines? Were it so,

it would indeed be an extension of the summer range of this peculiarly Arctic bird. It is possible Dr. Salvadori's supposition may be correct; for Macgillivray, always careful and cautious, was inclined to believe in the probability of the Snow Bunting breeding on the highest tops of the Grampians. But, until verified by specimens, I should be disposed to doubt the nidification of this bird in so low a latitude, and to believe that the flocks observed, and called "Uccelli di Vetro" by the natives, are not *Plectrophanes nivalis*, but the Snow-Finch (*Montifringilla nivalis*, Brehm), which does undoubtedly reside permanently both on the high Alps and the northern Apennines. The description given corresponds exactly with that of the Snow-Finch. I have before me a ♂ specimen of this bird shot by Lord Lilford, near Nice, pure white beneath, with the wings and tail white and black; and a ♀ shot by myself, on the Gemmi Pass, in July, with the under parts whitish, and the wings and tail white and brownish black. I have frequently noticed flocks of this species, in spring and summer, on all the Alpine passes, and in the month of November have met with a large flock on the crest of the Apennines, between Bologna and Florence, while I have never seen the Snow Bunting in those regions.

While acting critic, may I also suggest that I think Mr. J. T. Moggridge must be in error in stating that the males of *Saxicola cachinnans* and *S. stapazina* are at any season remarkably alike in colouring? I am well acquainted with both birds at all seasons of the year, and can assure that gentleman that I never, either in Europe, Asia, or Africa, saw *S. stapazina* assume any garb in the slightest degree approaching that of the Black Rock Chat. Perhaps he refers to *S. stapazina* and *S. albicollis* (sive *aurita*)?

I quite coincide with Mr. Moggridge's remarks on the Tithys Redstart, as I have long suspected that this bird is migratory only to a very limited extent. It certainly resides throughout the year in Greece, especially in the Mainote country (Laconia), where it is found most abundantly; and I have reason to believe that in our own country it is a permanent resident among the wilds of Dartmoor. I have found it numerous and vigorous when the hills have been covered with snow. A local naturalist

at Torquay, who has numerous specimens, assures me that he can find it on Dartmoor throughout the year.

Again, as regards the Rock Martin (*Cotyle rupestris*, Boie), though I am aware that writers on ornithology put it down (perhaps from analogy) as a migrant, I have not been able to ascertain any satisfactory proof of this habit. Mr. Moggridge bears testimony to its winter residence at Mentone; my friend Mr. Simpson assures me it spends the winter where it breeds, at Missolonghi in Northern Greece. I have seen it myself all the winter in the rocky gorges of the Morea, among the hills and rocks of Judæa, and throughout the Atlas range of North Africa, where I have noted it during every month from September to July*. On the other hand, I have been unable to ascertain satisfactorily a single locality where it is found *only* in summer. I trust that your world-wide contributors will soon be able to clear up these and all other doubtful points in the history of our bird-fauna.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

H. B. TRISTRAM.

Grantham, 15th April, 1863.

To the Editor of 'The Ibis.'

SIR,—I send you the following note on *Accipiter gularis* of the 'Fauna Japonica,' and *Accipiter virgatus* of Temminck.

In Mr. Swinhoe's interesting paper on the Ornithology of Formosa, published in the last Number of 'The Ibis,' reference is made, in page 213, to an opinion which I expressed that the above two species might prove identical.

I have subsequently had the opportunity of consulting Prof. Schlegel's description of the two species in the first part of his valuable Catalogue of Birds in the Leyden Museum, and, after doing so, I have very little doubt that this opinion is erroneous, and that the learned Professor is correct in considering the two species as distinct.

The specimen obtained by Mr. Swinhoe in Formosa, being immature, cannot be identified with certainty by any distinctive marks of coloration in plumage, these being only found in the

* It is also a permanent resident on the Rock of Gibraltar. See our remarks on this bird in "Vacation Tourists," 1861, p. 205.—ED.

adult birds; but its measurements agree with those of *A. gularis* as given by Prof. Schlegel in the work above cited, p. 33.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

J. H. GURNEY.

The following extract is from a letter addressed to the Editor by Mr. Elliott Coues:—

“ I am sorry that you laid so much stress upon what I said regarding the *range of habitat* of *Larus smithsonianus* as an argument in favour of its separation from the European *L. argentatus*.

“ I most fully agree with you that no species should be separated from another unless it can be diagnosed without knowing the locality whence it comes; in short, that morphological and not geographical differences should be the data upon which to found species. I think, however, that RANGE may, in some instances, justify us in separating specimens which show, in EVERY EXAMPLE, an amount of difference which could not be regarded as specific were the birds shot out of the same flock or in the same particular locality; but this is the extent to which I would allow geographical range to influence my opinion. In the case in point, viz. that of *Larus smithsonianus*, perhaps I weakened my argument for its specific distinction by referring at all to range of habitat. I attach but very little importance to that fact, and inserted it upon Prof. Baird’s suggestion, merely as one reason WHY we might expect to find the distinctive characters which really do exist.”

To the Editor of ‘The Ibis.’

April 27, 1863.

SIR,—Among some skins with which I have been lately favoured by Mr. Bartlett, the superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, are some bearing labels in the handwriting of my late friend Dr. Kelaart. Among them are those of a pair of Woodpeckers, male and female, marked “*Brachypternus ceylonus*, from Newera Elia.” They are, however, of a different species and genus, and new to the fauna of Ceylon, being apparently quite identical with the *Chrysocolaptes hæmatribon* of my catalogue,

p. 55, where I referred to what I supposed to be a Philippine specimen obtained at the dispersal of the former Macao Museum. In the crimson colouring of its entire upper parts this species resembles the *Brachypternus ceylonus*, and bears a similar relationship to its Indian congeners, the different orange-backed Woodpeckers appertaining to the genera *Chrysocolaptes*, *Brachypternus*, and *Chrysonotus* (v. *Tiga*). In like manner, certain other birds are of a deeper or darker hue in Ceylon, e. g. *Corvus splendens* and *Acridotheres tristis*; but the *Hypsipetes* of Ceylon is more like *H. psaroides* of the sub-Himalayan region than the darker *H. ganeesa*, Sykes (v. *unicolor*, Jerdon), of S. India. We know, however, comparatively little of the special ornithology of the extreme south of the Indian peninsula, where a nearer approach to certain Cinghalese modifications may yet be proved to occur. In the Tenasserim provinces, I remarked that the common House Maina (*Acridotheres tristis*) was dark-coloured, as in Ceylon; and the familiar Crow of all that region, from the valley of the Irawádi to beyond Ava, southward to Mergui, is even darker than the Cinghalese variety of *C. splendens*, and moreover has a much shriller ordinary caw, which is a more remarkable distinction. Otherwise the Burmese Crow exactly resembles the Indian *C. splendens*, except that the grey of the plumage must be looked for to be observed at all, and then appears very faintly. At Akyab the regular Indian *C. splendens* is numerous, and has spread to Kyuk Phoo; but elsewhere in Arakan there is only the *C. culminatus*, the range of which extends southward down the Malayan peninsula at least as far as Malacca, and this is probably the supposed *C. corax* of Raffles's list of the birds of Sumatra. The black and shrill-voiced race of *C. splendens* does not appear to inhabit the Malayan peninsula; at least it is not found in Penang, Malacca, or Singapore, and, like the corresponding ordinary Crow of India, it only occurs where there is a dense human population. But in Malacca, or its vicinity, is found the *C. macrorhynchus*, Vieillot, a very distinct black Crow, which Mr. Moore has lately described in the Catalogue of the late India-House collection by the name *C. tenuirostris*, and under the supposition that it had been killed in Bombay! I have seen

the skin described by Mr. Moore (which remains unmounted among the ornithological stores of the British Museum), and recognized at a glance the mode of preparation so characteristic of skins received from Malacca, with which I myself and others have long been familiar. Unquestionably the species has no claim to a place in the Fauna Indica. In 'The Ibis,' 1862, p. 325, I observe *C. macrorhynchus* of Temm. and Schlegel placed as a synonym of *C. japonensis*, Bp.; but this, as "from its size it may be classed as a Raven," must be widely different from the Malayan bird long previously named *macrorhynchus* by Vieillot.

E. BLYTH.

A few Corrigenda for 'The Ibis.'

When I left India in December last, I had seen no 'Ibis' later than No. 13. I now submit a few notes, chiefly corrigenda, relative to the subsequent issues.

Ibis, 1862, p. 193, line 4 from bottom of page,—and again, p. 194, lines 2, 7,—and p. 388, line 13 from bottom, read "Yonzalin (or Yoon-za-Leen)."

P. 194. *Cypselus vittatus* has since been received from Moulmein, where it was obtained by Major S. R. Tickell.

P. 257. The formerly supposed *Saxicola leucura* of India, referred to by Mr. Swinhoe, is *S. opistholeuca*, Strickland, figured in Sir W. Jardine's 'Contributions to Ornithology.'

P. 387, line 10, for *Falco* "*cherrug*" read "*F. jugger*;" and line 22, for "female" read "male."

P. 390, line 1, for "belly" read "bill."

Ibis, 1863, p. 1, note. *Palæornis alexandri* proves to be common in the Andaman Islands.

P. 4, line 16. The Ya-ma-doung range of mountains separates the seaward province of Arakan from that of Pegu (or the valley of the Irawádi).

P. 5, line 13. By "Indo-Chinese countries" I mean those lying eastward of the Bay of Bengal, or the Trans-Gangetic peninsula. I observe that the term is also employed to designate the Himalayan and Chinese mountain territories.

P. 20, No. 65. *Buteo canescens* is referred by Mr. Gurney to *B. ferox*, S. Gmelin, v. *rufinus*, Rüppell, and *B. leucurus*, Naumann.

P. 20, No. 66. *Buteo rufiventer*, Jerdon, is referred by Mr. Gurney to *B. cirtensis* of the 'Exploration de l'Algérie' (*vide* Ibis, 1862, p. 362). I have seen but one Nilgiri specimen, which is in the Calcutta Museum. This might well pass for one of the many individual varieties of *B. vulgaris*, and numerous examples from the N.W. Himalaya, several of which are in the same collection, I consider to be unmistakeably *B. vulgaris*.

P. 31. Is not *Hemerodromus* identical in form with *Cursorius bicinctus*, to which the generic name *Rhinoptilus* was given by Strickland?

P. 33. To the Arabic, French, and Latin names for the "*Herodias bubulcus*" add the Hindustáni appellation *Gai Bogla* (literally "Cow Heron"), corrupted into *caboga* by Pennant, undè *Ardea caboga*.

P. 212. Prof. Schlegel's idea of the merely seasonal appearance of the occipital crest in *Spizaetus* is altogether a mistake. Neither is the crest of these birds characteristic of any particular age.

P. 217. Mr. Swinhoe fancies that I had only compared his "*Scops semitorques*" from Foochow with Himalayan specimens of *Scops lempiji*. There are numerous examples of this bird in the Calcutta Museum from S. India, and also from Malacca. These exhibit slight local distinctions which are difficult to understand—equally great with any presented by the Foochow bird.

E. BLYTH.

Briggeston House, near Amesbury, Wilts,
April 30th, 1863.

It will no doubt be in the recollection of some of our readers, that in our first volume (Ibis, 1859, p. 415) we announced that the late Mr. J. D. Salmon had bequeathed his valuable cabinet of Eggs to the Linnean Society, and we expressed a hope that it would be there preserved intact. Our information has proved to be correct; but the result of the affair has, unfortunately, turned out very different from what we anticipated. It was intimated to the Council of the Society, shortly after that gentleman's death (which took place on the 5th August, 1859), that the bequest was conditional, and the stipulations required by his admini-

strators being such as the Society could not accept, some delay took place in the transfer. About a year and a half afterwards, the wrapper of this Magazine contained a notice that on the 23rd April, 1861, and following day, "a superb and unique collection of British Birds' Eggs, belonging to the Museum of a late celebrated physician," would be sold at Mr. Stevens's rooms. When the catalogue of this sale came out, it was pretty evident that its compiler had had access to Mr. Salmon's papers. The catalogue purported to include very many eggs (some of them most valuable specimens) which were *well known* by several of our supporters to have been in Mr. Salmon's possession a short time only before his decease. These were, however, interspersed with others, the histories of which, as there given, were so manifestly untrue as to render it plain that the writer was guilty of crass ignorance as an ornithologist, even if they did not suggest the possibility of something worse. We made some inquiry of our friend Mr. S. Stevens respecting this sale. He frankly told us that all he could say was, that the person who communicated with him respecting it professed to be acting under the directions of the executors of the late Dr. Martin Barry, F.R.S., who was certainly entitled to the designation of a "late celebrated physician." On further inquiry in another quarter, we were told that the presence in the sale of so many eggs known to have once been Mr. Salmon's property was to be accounted for by the fact that Dr. Barry had received them in exchange from that gentleman! Now considering that some of these, unmistakeably described as they were in the catalogue, were specimens so valuable that it was impossible to suppose Mr. Salmon would ever have willingly parted with them, we thought the story a lame one, but with it were fain to be content. Some time after, hearing that Mr. Salmon's collection had been actually handed over to the Linnean Society, and was to be seen in their rooms at Burlington House, we went thither, and found that all its choicest rarities had been removed, and their places supplied by most palpable forgeries or worthless substitutes. It then became plain that an extensive fraud had been perpetrated by some one. But no remedy could be suggested, and we did not

see that any advantage was to be derived from adverting to the circumstance. However, within the last few weeks, an announcement has again appeared in the public prints that a collection of British Birds' Eggs, the bulk of which "was formed by Dr. Martin Barry," would be sold at Mr. Stevens's on the 6th and 7th May. The catalogue of this sale was evidently from the same pen that had indited the previous one we have noticed, and we feel it incumbent upon us to denounce it as one of the grossest cases of attempted imposition we have ever heard of. We say "attempted," because we believe that the knowledge of many collectors in the rooms at the time of sale prevented their being taken in; but with some of our less experienced brethren we fear the case may have been different. We can only hope that our now drawing attention to these facts will prevent any recurrence of the fraud, should such a thing be contemplated; and further, that Mr. Stevens will not hesitate to decline all future dealings with persons who are likely to bring so much discredit on a long-established business, which we believe has hitherto been conducted with entire good faith. It may be an unpleasant act for him to perform, but he may rely upon our full sympathy; and we are sure that all honest ornithologists, both amateurs and professionals (to each of which classes his constant sales are matters of so much convenience), will support him in his refusal. It only remains for us to say that not the slightest reliance is to be placed upon any one statement contained in either of these catalogues, unless it be elsewhere corroborated by other evidence; and that the scientific value of what is called Mr. Salmon's Collection of Eggs, in the apartments of the Linnean Society, is exactly nothing at all.

We have received the following letter from a correspondent, who signs himself "Oophilus," relating partly to the same subject:—

SIR,—It has ever been the fate of true science to be attended by the false maiden who travesties her every step and parodies all her discoveries. The astrologist has mocked the astronomer; chemistry has been persecuted by the alchemist. Though her

loftier sisters have been haunted thus, yet oology, that modest offshoot of embryology, might have hoped to escape. On her behalf I must crave permission to enter a protest against the treatment to which she has been exposed. I could say much on the injudicious and reckless course of many of her sincere friends, whose free handling of many a waning species contrasts painfully with their tender manipulation of the eggs "*in situ*" (in their cabinet), whose bribes imperil the continuance in our island of the royal Eagle, and corrupt the morals of the once-faithful guardians of the Scottish forests. It is indeed painful to see the generous efforts of princely proprietors to preserve the last relics of a royal race thus baffled. One almost shudders at the ruthlessness with which a scientific friend can relate the feat of his having "harried" two Golden Eagle nests on the same day. While I fully admit the interest and value of an indigenous collection, and believe that the value of oology, as a branch of ornithic embryology, in determining the divisions of genera and the affinities of species, is scarcely yet sufficiently acknowledged by naturalists, I must denounce as not only useless, but mischievous, the inordinate craving after a long series of British-taken specimens of our rarer birds. We all deprecate the achievements of the gunner who stalks behind a hedge after every rare bird in his neighbourhood, and then chronicles his exploits in the pages of the 'Zoologist.' Is the indefatigable "British-egg" collector a less mischievous depredator?

I can only hope that Mr. Fenwick, who has cast his protecting arms round the grilse, will, when he has secured to our fish-spawn the rest he promises on its own river-bed, devote his kindly sympathies to the homes of our native birds. I can fully comprehend, for I participate myself in the enthusiasm of the friend who exclaimed, on being asked his opinion of a somewhat variable egg, "I do not profess to understand an Eagle's or an Osprey's egg unless I see a drawerful;" but can we not, when the identity of the species is indisputable, content ourselves with supplying our series from regions where there are enough and to spare?

Enough as to the indiscreet zeal of the true naturalist. There is another and larger class, the mere collectors, who gather eggs

as they might accumulate old china or postage-stamps, to as little use and with as little scientific intent, and yet, sometimes, develope into practical naturalists. These are the victims of a system of imposture as gross, and far less ingenious than the fictitious antiquities of Italy and Egypt; and it is this system which has provoked my present letter. In oological beyond all other collections, dealers' specimens are most unsatisfactory; and from long acquaintance with the frauds of the trade, I would urge upon every young collector never to admit into his cabinet an egg purchased from a dealer. They are rarely genuine, scarcely ever authentic. It is true, valuable specimens may sometimes be thus obtained; and we have heard of the Great Auk's egg turning up in a London bazaar, and even under the shadow of St. Clement's Danes, though, as to the latter instance, we should be sorry here to trace the previous history of the treasure. In most other branches of natural science, the specimen carries with it the guarantee of its genuineness; not so in oology. Here, not only the authenticity, but, in very many instances, the genuineness also must depend upon testimony alone. It is to our late valued friend Mr. Wolley, and to his worthy colleague and successor Mr. A. Newton, that naturalists are indebted for the scrupulous care and rigorous investigation with which our best collections are now formed. But as the progress of art has rendered the forgery of bank-notes not more impossible, but more ingenious, so the success of the principles these gentlemen were the first to promulgate has evoked a more elaborate system of imitation. Mr. Wolley's Sale Catalogues, each of them almost a synopsis of the nidification of the birds of Lapland, are well known to all of us. Their repute has, it seems, brought unworthy imitators into the field. I have before me two catalogues of sales in London, during the present month, which charmingly illustrate the simplicity supposed to exist among mere collectors.

The first is a catalogue of a "valuable and authentic collection of British birds' eggs." The list is a very complete copy of Yarrell's Index, but does not descend into particulars more definite than "Norway," "Lapland," &c. Suffice it to say, that the egg of the Cirl Bunting is stated to have been taken in Greenland; and that those of the Sanderling, Sabine's Snipe,

Brown Snipe, Knot, Curlew, Sandpiper, Red-breasted Goose, Smew, and Steller's Western Duck are all inserted in their proper places. Not even the Ivory Gull is wanting. We can only hope that the buyers of these rarities will not feel any scepticism on the part of their friends as to the value of their purchases to be a personal insult.

But the first catalogue is simple and uncircumstantial. We now come to the second. This is a well-printed pamphlet of 36 pages, a neat imitation and enlargement of one of Mr. Wolley's, containing an amount of information on the geographical distribution of British birds which is positively startling. We commence with an egg of the Egyptian Vulture, taken in Guernsey, followed by that of an Osprey, which we would rather have seen in its former home in Mr. Salmon's collection, reposing in the peaceful stillness of the Linnean rooms. Then there is a Hobby's egg from Alnwick, *said to have been* T. Bewick's. Perhaps the connexion is attained by the consideration that Bewick and Alnwick are both Northumbrian, which the Hobby as certainly is not. Then we have three of the same articles from the Isle of Arran, which no sceptic can doubt; for the date is given as June 4, 1847; and that must be proof! Further north still we go, and discover the novel fact that Goshawks breed in Caithness, verified again by the exact date and locality. We return to Arran, and find there the Rough-legged Buzzard breeding year after year; and as a further proof thereof, we are told that Mr. Salmon once offered £5 worth of eggs in exchange for a specimen from this lot. Again, we find, after picking up the Swallow-tailed Kite in Mexico, Montagu's Harrier laying eggs at Alnwick, where no Northumbrian ever met with it. Indeed, Arran and Alnwick seem the favoured resorts of these phenomena, and Mr. Newton's injunctions as to marking the date and place of capture on each specimen have been faithfully obeyed. The capture of a Snowy Owl's egg at Anhalt, on the 5th of June, would indeed have been news to Mr. Wolley. But it is really a waste of time to examine in detail this romance of ornithology. It is enough to say that among the birds breeding in Arran are mentioned the Scops Owl, Richard's Pipit, Three-toed Woodpecker (*Apternus tridactylus*—not yet a British bird), Turtle-Dove,

Turnstone, and last, but not least, Steller's Western Duck!! Guernsey supplies us with the Calandra Lark; Portugal, with White's Thrush; the Isle of Ushant, with Macqueen's Bustard; Norway, with the Curlew Sandpiper; Uist, with the Red-throated Pipit, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Great Northern Diver. Several pairs of the Two-barred Crossbill have bred at Loch Fyne, to say nothing of the Jack Snipe; while we are offered the Brown Snipe (*Macrorhamphus griseus*), with the bird that laid the eggs, from Pwllheli in North Wales! Many additions to the British fauna are presented for the first time, Arran enriching our list with specimens of *Circaëtus gallicus* and *Sterna tenuirostris*. The catalogue is appropriately wound up with the egg of the Bimaculated Duck, from Siberia, and the travelling-case in which all these prodigies were exhibited to the wondering gaze of Dr. Thienemann.

These instances may suffice to show the sort of verification which is offered to the purchasing collector. Although no naturalist could be thus imposed upon, it may not be useless to urge upon the readers of 'The Ibis' the importance of endeavouring to infuse healthier principles into the minds of their collecting friends, and remembering that truth—truth for its own sake—is the one aim and object of the naturalist, to denounce all shams, all indulgence of the passion for merely amassing, and to let their cabinets, as well as their studies, be like Cæsar's wife.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

OOPHILUS.

During the past month numerous instances of the occurrence of Pallas's Sand-grouse (*Syrhaptus paradoxus*) in this country and the neighbouring parts of the Continent have taken place. One of our most valued contributors has promised us an account of this new immigration from Tartary for our next Number.